

We Campaign Against Duck Shooting

Early this year the BCV decided to actively campaign against the shooting of native birds and set up a petition against duck hunting on change.org. On 23 February Ven. Thich Phuoc Tan OAM, former BCV President, delivered the petition with 13,500 signatures to the Parliament of Victoria. Two Members of Parliament received the petition, Gary Maas MP and Steve McGhie MP, the



Ven. Thich Phuoc Tan delivering the petition to Parliament.

Cabinet Secretary. The petition had approximately 4,500 signatures from Victoria representing 442 post-codes. The government announced an inquiry the next day and in our submission to it we said that just as shooting wild animals in Africa is no longer acceptable it is no longer acceptable to kill native waterbirds. Hundreds of thousands of birds are killed by hunters each year and we are asking for a permanent ban. The petition now has over 28,000 signatures.

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**Newsletter editor and
photographer -
Dr Diana Cousens
Vice-President BCV**

Please sign our petition at
Change.org asking the
Victorian Premier to ban
duck shooting.
<https://chnq.it/W6snBntTVG>

Family Violence Support
1800 015 188
[https://www.safesteps.org.
au/about-us/contact-us/](https://www.safesteps.org.au/about-us/contact-us/)

*This newsletter is
supported by the
Victorian Government
through the Swastika
Education and
Awareness Program.*

We Say Yes to the Voice to Parliament

The BCV says yes to the upcoming referendum on the proposed Indigenous Voice to Parliament. A Voice to Parliament will give Indigenous communities a route to help inform policy and legal decisions that impact their lives. Giving people a say will lead to more effective results. We support the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils' paper which notes that the proposal for the Voice comes from an exhaustive process of consultation within First Nations communities and is supported by a large majority of First Nations people. It says that the Voice provides a strong foundation for the future development of a Treaty and Truth Telling process. So we say vote Yes!

Sri Lankan Sangha Meet Family Violence Experts

Dr Praveena Rajkopal, BCV Healthy Relationships Project Officer

Buddhist faith leaders identified male power, economic stress, cultural attitudes and lack of knowledge about support services and communication skills as the main causes of family violence at a 'Meet and Greet' session between five senior Sri Lankan sangha and family violence sector experts. These faith leaders play a critical role in supporting family violence victims but face a myriad of challenges in that role. The lively dialogue at the session made clear that more time and effort are needed to fully explore and unpack this issue with leaders. Both the sector experts and Sri Lankan Buddhist leaders will participate in further discussions to create solutions. The session was held in late March at BCV headquarters in Mitcham.

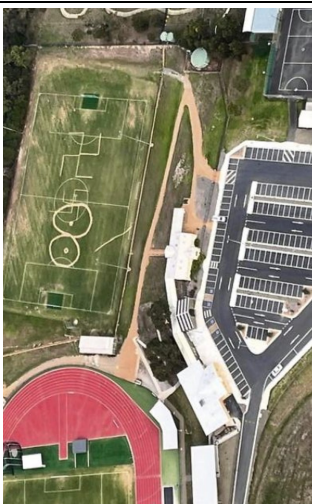
Present were three Buddhist monks, Ven Digamadulle Wimalananda (Sakyamuni Sambuddha Vihara, Berwick), Ven Koholankala Kovidha (Young Buddhist Research and Cultural Centre), Ven Ghanawimala (Dhamma Sarana Temple, Keysborough), two Buddhist nuns, Ven Dhammadinna and Ven Bodhicitta, and leading organisations in the prevention and response sector being The Orange Door, Safe and Equal, Red Cross, Women's Information Referral Exchange and White Ribbon Australia.

Step by Step to the Holocaust

Diana Cousens



Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of Germany 1933-1945. He is wearing a swastika as an insignia of the Nazi Party. Here the swastika is called a Hakenkreuz and classified as a Nazi symbol, and can only be displayed for the purpose of education, science, academia or art.
Photo: Hugo Jaeger



The ground of the Lilydale Eagles Soccer Club at Mount Evelyn was defaced with Nazi symbols in April 2022. This action is now subject to a ban and is punishable by a fine and imprisonment.
(Photo: Australian Jewish News)

*This is Part Two in a series for the Swastika Education and Awareness Campaign. A large part of this article is based on information in the book, *The Holocaust, A New History*, by Laurence Rees (2017).*

As discussed in the last issue of the BCV News (March 2023), it is against the law to intentionally display a Nazi Hakenkreuz in public. It is not against the law to publicly display the swastika (which may be mistaken for the Nazi Hakenkreuz symbol) for genuine cultural or religious purposes. Traditionally the swastika has been a sign of auspiciousness and good fortune in the Buddhist, Hindu and other traditions and so the ban has an exemption for traditional religious and cultural use. In the last article it was explained as to how the Nazis adopted the symbol, as it had been converted into a sign representing the fictional Aryan race by various German secret societies. The Nazis used the swastika, renamed the Hakenkreuz, as something like a trademark or a brand in their persecution of the Jewish community in Europe which led to the death of six million Jews in the Holocaust during the Second World War (1939-1945). For the benefit of those of us in the Buddhist community who are not students of European history what follows is a simplified summary to explain how this persecution came about.

After the First World War

The First World War (WWI) took place between 1914 and 1918. Germany had attempted to expand its territory into other parts of Europe and it was defeated by Allied powers including Britain, France, Russia and the USA. After the defeat Germany was subject to the Treaty of Versailles which demanded financial compensation (reparations) be paid to the Allies for starting the war. The value would be the equivalent of about US\$442 billion today. This left Germany impoverished and humiliated. Adolf Hitler, an Austrian who had been a soldier in WWI and who had a failed career as an artist in Vienna, was particularly embittered. He blamed the Jewish community in Germany for Germany's problems and tapped into ideas about true Germans being 'volk', people from the land, typically living in the countryside, and the Jewish people being a foreign race who were typically living in cities. The Jewish community in Europe had suffered from centuries of persecution owing to ideas arising from some Christian traditions that blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus Christ, even though in the Christian gospels Jesus is killed by Roman soldiers. In 1919 Adolf Hitler wrote to a friend blaming the suffering of Germany on the Jewish people and describing them as motivated by lust for money and domination. He also said that the aim of any German government must be, 'the uncompromising removal of the Jew altogether'. (Rees, 2017, p.1) Hitler went on to lead the Nazi Party and was Chancellor of Germany from 1933 to 1945.

The Rise of the Nazis

Hitler joined the German Workers' Party in 1919, a small political group in Munich which regularly met at a beer hall. He was mentored by senior members who saw in his awkward manner, extreme prejudice, inability to have a normal conversation and absolute certainty in his convictions a useful rabble rouser. The party was renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party, known by the shortened version, the Nazi Party. Hitler promoted physical strength above book learning and formed a paramilitary group called the 'Stormtroopers'. On 8 November 1923 he attempted to incite a revolution by forcing his way, supported by his Stormtroopers, into a public meeting with the leader of Bavaria and then leading a march through Munich the following day. This led to a confrontation with police and sixteen Nazis and four policemen were killed. Hitler was held responsible and was convicted of high treason, imprisoned for five years but let out after only one. During his time in jail he wrote the book *Mein Kampf* which documented his ideas. He described the Jewish community as a threat which should be exterminated, he was centrally concerned with ideas of 'race' and of regulating who was allowed to have children, and he wanted to expand Germany into countries on the eastern borders.

The 1930s

In 1924 Germany refinanced their Versailles reparation payments through bank loans from the USA. This was called the Dawes Plan and created a great problem after the Wall Street Crash in 1929, as the sudden advent of the Great Depression in the USA led to millions being thrown out of work and banks collapsing in Germany. In this atmosphere of increased poverty and insecurity the Nazis saw an opportunity to galvanise support and won 18.3% of the vote in German elections in 1930. This was a big increase on the 2.6% they had won in 1928 and set the stage for a massive vote of 37.3% in 1932, after Hitler became the candidate for President. The President, Paul von Hindenburg, appointed him as Chancellor on 30 January 1933. Soon after the Parliament, the Reichstag, passed the Enabling Act which transformed the democratic Weimar Republic into Nazi Germany, a totalitarian one-party state. On Hindenburg's death on 2 August 1934, Hitler assumed both roles, as Chancellor and President.

The Holocaust

From 1935, under new laws declared at Nuremberg, Jews were systematically discriminated against, they were not allowed to marry non-Jews, their German citizenship was taken away and their businesses were boycotted. They were not allowed to work in the law, government, secondary schools and universities. Many tried to leave Germany but it was extremely difficult to get visas for other countries. The swastika, or Hakenkreuz, became the sole flag for Nazi Germany. Complicating the laws against the Jewish people was the difficulty of defining Jewishness. While the Nazis considered Jews to have different blood and to be a different race, there was no blood test for Jewishness and laws relied on the religious affiliation of three grandparents.

Concentration Camps

From 1933 a network of concentration camps was built throughout Germany so as to imprison political opponents. By 1938 there were 24,000 prisoners, particularly petty criminals, the homeless and the mentally ill. A pogrom, or violent campaign against the Jewish community called Kristallnacht on 9 November 1938, saw an additional 26,000 Jewish men transported to camps. After the start of World War Two (WWII) in 1939 the number of camps increased as did the persecution and isolation of the Jewish community. Camps were also built in German occupied countries, most famously six death camps in Poland which used gas in enclosed rooms to kill large numbers of people. During WWII Germany occupied or partly occupied countries including Poland, France, the Soviet Union, Greece, Norway and parts of North Africa such as Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. By the end of the war in 1945, six million Jews had been killed and this is known as the Holocaust.

Neo-Nazis in Australia

Neo-Nazis are defined by their anti-Semitism, racism, white nationalism as well as hatred of homosexuals. Australia's most infamous neo-Nazi is Brenton Tarrant, the terrorist who killed 51 Muslims in mosques at Christchurch, New Zealand. There are many small groups with neo-Nazi ideology and they are known to use the Hakenkreuz as a symbol to promote hate. In March this year at an anti-trans rally in Melbourne a group of neo-Nazis did the Nazi salute, shouting, 'Seig Heil', on the steps of Parliament. This gesture is a way of symbolising Nazi affiliation. White nationalism has a long history in Australia that predates the Nazis. From a Buddhist perspective, the persecution of the Chinese gold diggers in the 1850s is an example of white nationalism that had an impact on the Buddhist community, as was the White Australia policy - 1901-1973. White nationalism in Australia persists both within groups identified as neo-Nazi and outside those groups. While Neo-Nazi groups in Australia are mostly small in number, their activity in defacing Islamic mosques and Jewish synagogues with Nazi symbols is a cause of acute distress.

The infiltration of neo-Nazi individuals and ideas into major parties is also concerning, noting that 22 neo-Nazis were expelled from NSW Nationals in 2018. In March 2023, the Sydney Morning Herald revealed that the Australian Defence Force had launched an inquiry into serving soldiers with neo-Nazi links.



Buddha at Bright Moon Temple, Springvale, with swastika insignia on chest. Photo taken at Lunar New Year celebration, 29 January 2023, before the fire. This statue was lost to the fire.

It is not against the law to display the swastika for genuine cultural or religious purposes.

See more about the Swastika Education Awareness Program at <https://bcv.org.au/swastika-education-awareness-campaign/>

Would your temple like to host an information session? Contact us - administrator@bcv.org.au

Ten Years as a Buddhist Chaplain

BCV Senior Chaplain Coordinator - Ven. Hojun Futen



Ven. Hojun Futen, BCV Senior Chaplain, at the opening of the BCV office in Mitcham in 2013.
< hojun.futen@bcv.org.au>

Milestones



We are very sorry to hear of the passing of Father Bob Maguire (1934-2023), Roman Catholic priest, friend of the poor and participant in interfaith dialogue. He attended several BCV events, including Iftar dinners.



We salute Fo Guang Shan for their generosity in donating \$50,000 to Bright Moon for the rebuilding of their temple. Photo at Buddha's Day, Fed Square.

My first contact with Buddhist chaplaincy came about while staying with my first long term Buddhist teacher, Bhante Bodhi Kassapa, in Heidelberg at Vipassana Insight Meditation Centre. I had a job at a bank and he was teaching meditation to cancer patients at the Austin Hospital. Many years later, when finishing up my training as a Zen Buddhist monk in Japan, I asked my master what he thought I should do when I returned to Australia. He advised me to attach myself to a hospital and teach the patients meditation. It seems as if it was my karma to become a Buddhist chaplain. And this year marks my 10 year anniversary as a chaplain for the Buddhist Council of Victoria.

In the first half of 2013 I begin training in chaplaincy with the very knowledgeable Ven. Bom Hyon Sunim, who was the coordinator of Spiritual Health Care at the time. Upon completion Sunim deployed me to my first hospital, the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) under the well guided management of David Glennister. I went on to do my first formal six month training in chaplaincy, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), at Casey Hospital. While working at RMH, I was deployed to Port Phillip Prison and came under the guidance of the wonderfully nurturing Christine Thompson, the then BCV Prison Chaplaincy Coordinator. I then completed my second unit of CPE at RMH with David. Soon after there were changes. Sunim moved to NSW and the deeply compassionate Ven. Tenzin Wangmo and I took over the Spiritual Healthcare Coordinator role together. Not long after Ven. Tenzin moved to the USA, Christine moved to Canberra and I was left as the Senior Chaplain and Spiritual Care Coordinator for both Healthcare and Prisons, a role I have held for about the past seven years. Since then I have maintained the relationships between the BCV and stakeholder institutions including Spiritual Health Association and Corrections Victoria and trained numerous chaplains. There have been many wonderful BCV chaplains over the years; too many to list here by name, but all very wise, compassionate and a joy to work with. I thank them all greatly.

Chaplaincy is an amazing way to practice, deepen and nurture your understanding of the Buddha Dharma, and as such, I would be remiss in not thanking all the delightful, and sometimes challenging, patients and prisoners I have worked with these past ten years. If I have learned anything in this time it is that, despite the outer suffering and difficulties each and everyone faces, the Buddha indeed shines within all of them, some more brightly than others, but always there. Compassion and equanimity grows with every encounter and one of the best ways to learn the Dharma is to teach it. The value of insights gained when challenged and questioned by men and women in situations of acute suffering is immeasurable. Over time I have found my place in the Buddhist world as a chaplain. It is not necessarily what I had hoped for when I began my life as a Buddhist monk, with dreams of meditating all day until awakening dawned upon me. Instead I work six days a week in prisons as far away as Ararat, Beechworth and Sale, and am on-call for blessings in hospitals any time of day or night. I might not ever lay to rest the fetter of becoming, at least not in this lifetime. However, I am incredibly blessed and grateful to do the work I do, along with those who work with me and with those whom we work for. To be a monk is sometimes to live a difficult life in the service of others, but it is a life full of joy.

Our thanks also to Arunamalin, who recently retired after seven years as a Buddhist chaplain working at different times at Tarrengower, Loddon and Middleton prisons in Victoria.

Your Temple Can Apply to Join the Buddhist Council of Victoria

If your Buddhist temple would like to join the BCV then download the form at <https://bcv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Membership-Form-2022-web.pdf>
See more about membership at <https://bcv.org.au/membership/>

By participating in the BCV you will have chance to inform government policy in Victoria and Australia and have a say in what BCV focuses on in serving the Buddhist community. If your membership has lapsed please renew for \$55.